

## **Appendix B**

### **EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503**

**Office of Federal Procurement Policy  
September 12, 1997**

**POLICY LETTER NO. 97-01**

**TO: THE HEADS OF CIVILIAN EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

**SUBJECT:** Procurement System Education, Training and Experience Requirements for Acquisition Personnel

**Purpose.** The purpose of this Letter is to implement Section 37 of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act, as amended (hereafter referred to as the Act).

**Authority.** These policies and procedures are issued pursuant to Section 37(b)(3) of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Act, as amended, (41 U.S.C. 401 et seq.), which directs the Administrator, Office of Federal Procurement Policy, to issue policies to promote uniform implementation of Section 37 of the Act by executive agencies, with due regard for differences in program requirements among agencies that may be appropriate and warranted in view of the agency mission.

**Background.** Beginning with the report of the Commission on Government Procurement in 1972, every major study of the Federal acquisition process has recommended improvements in the management of the Acquisition Workforce, because "people are the most critical part of any effective procurement process". Subsequently, Congress directed every Federal department and agency to develop and maintain a procurement career management program to ensure an adequate professional workforce (section 16(4) of the Act). In Section 6(d)(5) of the Act, Congress further directed the OFPP Administrator, through the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI), to foster and promote the development of a professional Acquisition Workforce Government-wide. Pursuant to these statutory mandates, OFPP Policy Letter 92-3 (implemented in section 1.603-1 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation) establishes Government-wide policies and standards for skill-based training in performing contracting duties and tasks. In 1990 Congress passed the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAAWIA) which established education, training and experience requirements for entry and advancement in the acquisition career field within the Department of Defense (DOD). In 1996, Congress amended the OFPP Act to establish comparable education, training, and experience requirements for civilian agencies.

**Applicability.** This Letter applies to all executive agencies, except those subject to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (chapter 87 of title 10, United States Code).

**Responsibility for Acquisition Career Management Programs.** Subject to the authority, direction, and control of the head of an executive agency, the Senior Procurement Executive of the agency shall carry out all powers, functions, and duties of the head of the agency with respect to implementation of this Letter. The Senior Procurement Executive shall ensure that the policies of the head of the agency, established in accordance with this Letter, are implemented throughout the agency.

**Establishment of Agency-wide Policies and Procedures.** Agency heads, after consultation with the OFPP Administrator, shall establish department or agency-wide policies and procedures pursuant to the provisions of the Act. The Senior Procurement Executive of each affected agency shall advise the Administrator, within 180 days from the date of this Letter, on agency plans for issuing such policies and procedures for the effective management (including accessions, education, training and career development) of the Acquisition Workforce. Agency heads, unless otherwise advised by the OFPP Administrator within thirty (30) days after such notification, shall proceed with planned implementation activities. To the maximum extent practicable, these Acquisition Workforce policies and procedures shall be uniform in their implementation throughout the agency. The head of each department and agency shall issue such policies and procedures by May 1, 1998.

**Workforce Coverage.** For purposes of this Letter, the Acquisition Workforce of an agency includes:

- a. All positions in the General Schedule (GS-1102) Contracting Series and non-DOD uniformed personnel in comparable positions.
- b. All Contracting Officers regardless of General Schedule series with authority to obligate funds above the micropurchase threshold.
- c. All positions in GS-1105 Purchasing Series.**
- d. All Contracting Officer Representatives/Contracting Officer Technical Representatives, or equivalent positions.

The Administrator of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy will consult with the agencies in the identification of other acquisition related positions.

**Management Information System.** Agencies are required to collect and maintain standardized information on implementation of the provisions of section 37 of the Act. The Federal Acquisition Institute will work with the agencies and the Office of Personnel Management to establish and prescribe standard data elements for the purposes of this statutory requirement. To the maximum extent practicable, such management information systems will conform to the standards established by the Office of Personnel Management for the Central Personnel Data File. These systems shall include a data element on waivers under paragraph 9.g. of this Letter.

### **Career Development.**

- a. Career Paths - Agencies shall identify and publish model career paths or "road maps" to ensure that contracting and other personnel interested in pursuing careers in contracting are knowledgeable of the education, training, and experience requirements for employment, progression and advancement to the most senior positions in the contracting field within the agency.
- b. Critical Skills - For each career path, the critical acquisition-related duties and tasks employees must be competent to perform at the full performance and senior levels shall be established by the agencies and shall include coverage of duties and tasks as identified by the Director of the Federal Acquisition Institute. OFPP Policy Letter 92-3 established Government-wide standards for these purposes.
- c. Mandatory Education - The education requirements for acquisition positions are established by the OFPP Administrator, in coordination with the Office of Personnel Management, as prescribed by section 37(g) of the Act. The education requirements for GS-1102 positions have been established in coordination with the Office of Personnel Management.
- d. Mandatory Training and Experience - Experience requirements for GS-1102 positions are identified in the OPM Contract Specialist (GS-1102) Qualification Standard. In addition to the following mandatory training, agencies may require assignment-specific training for personnel in selected positions, as appropriate:
  - (1) All personnel in the GS-1102 Contracting Series and Contracting Officers (regardless of General Schedule Series) with authority to obligate funds above the micropurchase threshold shall complete the mandatory and related on-the-job training, as prescribed in OFPP Policy Letter 92-3.
  - (2) All Personnel in the Purchasing occupational series (General Schedule Series 1105), other civilian and uniformed personnel performing purchasing duties, and individuals with contracting authority at or below the simplified acquisition threshold, or with authority to place delivery orders at any dollar level, shall complete training in acquiring goods and services under FAR Part 13 and placing delivery orders.
  - (3) Contracting Officer Representatives/Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (CORs/COTRs) - The core training for CORs/COTRs must cover the competencies as contained in the FAI COR/COTR Workbook. Agencies may consider any training methodology to satisfy this requirement, i.e., classroom, correspondence, computer-based instruction, etc.
  - (4) Other acquisition related occupations - Training for these participants in the procurement process will be established as such occupations are identified by the OFPP Administrator.

- e. Skills Currency - Agencies shall establish policies that require an equivalent of at least 40 hours of continuing education or training every two years for contract specialists (GS-1102 series) and Contracting Officers who have satisfied the mandatory and agency/assignment-specific training for the purpose of maintaining currency of acquisition knowledge and skills. This may include, but is not limited to, agency sponsored training and management/executive seminars, special job and/or professional association related projects and/or participation in seminars/workshops, or other appropriated developmental activities.
- f. Tuition Assistance - The head of an executive agency may provide tuition reimbursement in education (including a full-time course of study leading to a degree) in accordance with section 4107 of title 5, United States Code, for personnel serving in acquisition positions in the agency.
- g. Waiver Authority for GS-1102 Education Requirements. The agency Senior Procurement Executive may, based on demonstrated analytical and decision making capabilities, job performance, and qualifying experience, waive one of the two sets of education requirements for an applicant for a GS-13 and above position based on a certification (see Contract Specialist (GS-1102) Qualification Standard) that the applicant possesses significant potential for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority. This waiver should be utilized only in rare and unusual circumstances, i.e., when there are no qualified candidates readily available. The use of this authority should be adequately documented and exercised on a case-by-case basis.
- h. Funding Levels - The head of an executive agency shall set forth separately the funding levels requested for education and training of the Acquisition Workforce in the budget justification documents submitted in support of the President's budget submitted to Congress under section 1105 of title 31, United States Code. Funds appropriated for education and training under this section may not be obligated for any other purpose.
- i. Program Evaluation - The OFPP Administrator shall evaluate the implementation of these provisions by executive agencies.

**FAI Responsibilities.** The OFPP Administrator is responsible for providing for and directing the activities of the FAI. The FAI is in turn responsible for a wide range of career management support activities associated with maintaining the inventory of acquisition personnel competencies for use by Federal and private sector education and training communities and providing specific and general technical assistance to Federal agencies in improving the quality of the Acquisition Workforce.

As courseware (including Workbooks) are developed and/or updated, these products will be made available through the FAI Homepage. The FAI Homepage address is: <http://www.gsa.gov/staff/v/training.htm>. The FAI specific responsibilities relating to the provisions of this Letter are to:

- a. foster and promote the development of a professional Acquisition Workforce;

- b. promote and coordinate Government-wide research and studies to improve the procurement process and the laws, policies, methods, regulations, procedures, and forms relating to acquisition by the executive agencies;
- c. collect and analyze Acquisition Workforce data from the Office of Personnel Management, the heads of executive agencies and, through periodic surveys of individual employees;
- d. periodically analyze acquisition career fields to identify critical competencies, duties, tasks, and related academic prerequisites, skills, and knowledge;
- e. Coordinate and assist agencies in identifying and recruiting highly qualified candidates for acquisition fields;
- f. develop instructional material for acquisition personnel in coordination with private and public acquisition colleges and training facilities;
- g. evaluate the effectiveness of training and career development programs for acquisition personnel;
- h. promote the establishment and utilization of academic programs by colleges and universities in acquisition fields;
- i. facilitate, to the extent requested by agencies, interagency intern and training programs; and
- j. perform other career management and research functions as directed by the Administrator.

**Information Contact.** Questions regarding this Policy Letter should be directed to Richard C. Loeb, Executive Secretary, Office of Federal Procurement Policy, 202-395-3254, facsimile, 202-395-5105. The address is Office of Federal Procurement Policy, 725 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20503.

**Judicial Review.** This Policy Letter is not intended to provide a constitutional or statutory interpretation of any kind and it is not intended, and should not be construed, to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any persons. It is intended only to provide policy guidance to agencies in the exercise of their discretion concerning Federal contracting. Thus, this Policy Letter is not intended, and should not be construed, to create any substantive or procedural basis on which to challenge any agency action or inaction on the ground that such action or inaction was not in accordance with this Policy Letter.

**Effective Date.** This Policy Letter is effective 30 days after the date of issuance.

Steven Kelman  
Administrator